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#9

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# GAMBIT



# SCALPHUNTED!



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REMY LeBEAU HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE OUTSIDER. ORPHANED AT BIRTH, HE WAS ADOPTED BY THE LEGENDARY THIEVES GUILD OF NEW ORLEANS, OFTEN SHUNNED BY HIS PEERS BECAUSE OF HIS STRANGE BURNING RED EYES. EVENTUALLY, HE REALIZED HE IS A MUTANT -- GIFTED AT BIRTH WITH THE ABILITY TO CHARGE INANIMATE OBJECTS WITH BIOKINETIC ENERGY THAT IS EXPLOSIVELY RELEASED! HE'S CHARMING. HE'S DEADLY. STAN LEE PRESENTS GAMBIT -- THE MOST MYSTERIOUS X-MAN OF ALL!

# GAMBIT

His name is VICTOR CREEDE. HE IS THE SAVAGE MUTANT ASSASSIN KNOWN AS **SABRETOOTH.**

CONTRARY TO HOW IT APPEARS, HE IS KNOCKING AT DEATH'S DOOR.

A STORY OF THE  
**SHATTERING**

# TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

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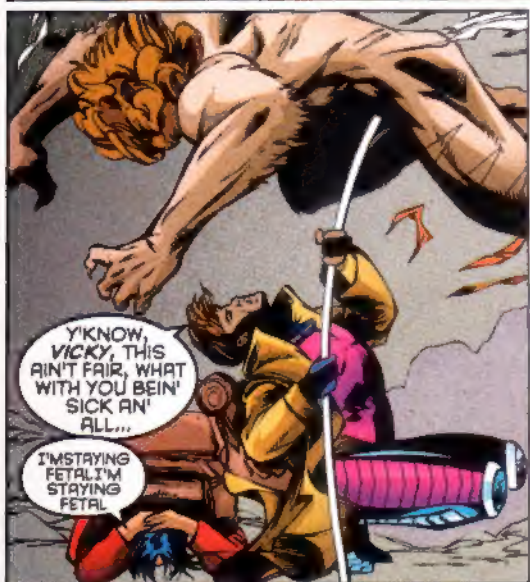
AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE WISH IT WOULD OPEN UP AND LET HIM IN.

STAY FETAL!

CAN DO!

REMY LEBEAU, ALSO KNOWN AS GAMBIT, THIEF, RECENTLY FIRED MEMBER OF THE OUTLAW X-MEN.

JACOB GAVIN JR. COURIER, PROFESSIONAL MESSENGER, AMATEUR WHINER, UNWILLINGLY DRAGGED ALONG IN GAMBIT'S GAME.



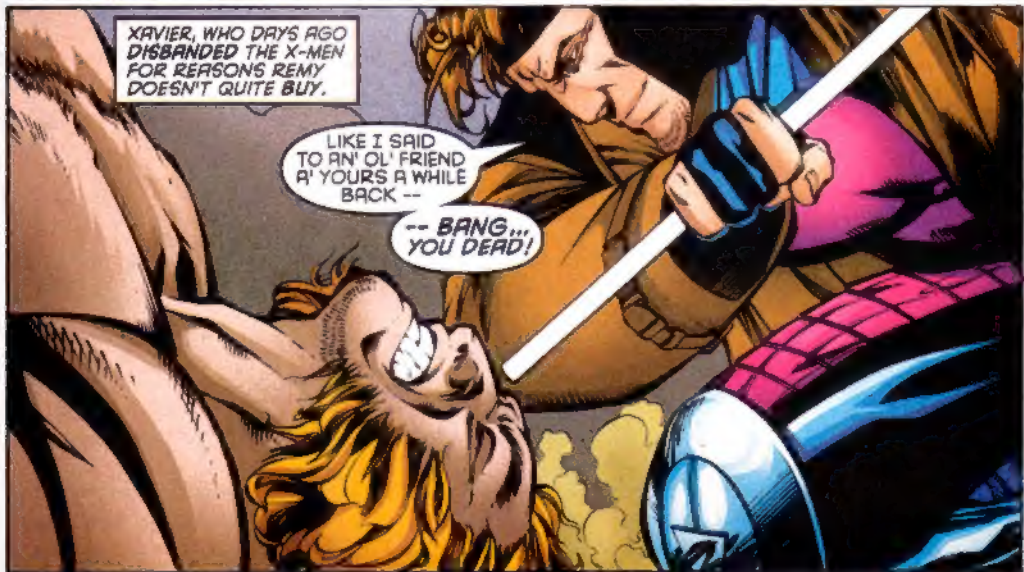
Y'KNOW, VICKY, THIS AIN'T FAIR, WHAT WITH YOU BEIN' SICK AN' ALL...

I'M STAYING FETAL I'M STAYING FETAL



GAMBIT NEEDS CREED TO HELP THEM BREAK INTO ONE OF MR. SINISTER'S STRONGHOLDS.

GAMBIT NEEDS INFORMATION FROM SINISTER TO FIGURE OUT THE HAND THE LEADER OF THE X-MEN, CHARLES XAVIER, IS PLAYING.



XAVIER, WHO DAYS AGO DISBANDED THE X-MEN FOR REASONS REMY DOESN'T QUITE BUY.

LIKE I SAID TO AN' OL' FRIEND A' YOURS A WHILE BACK --

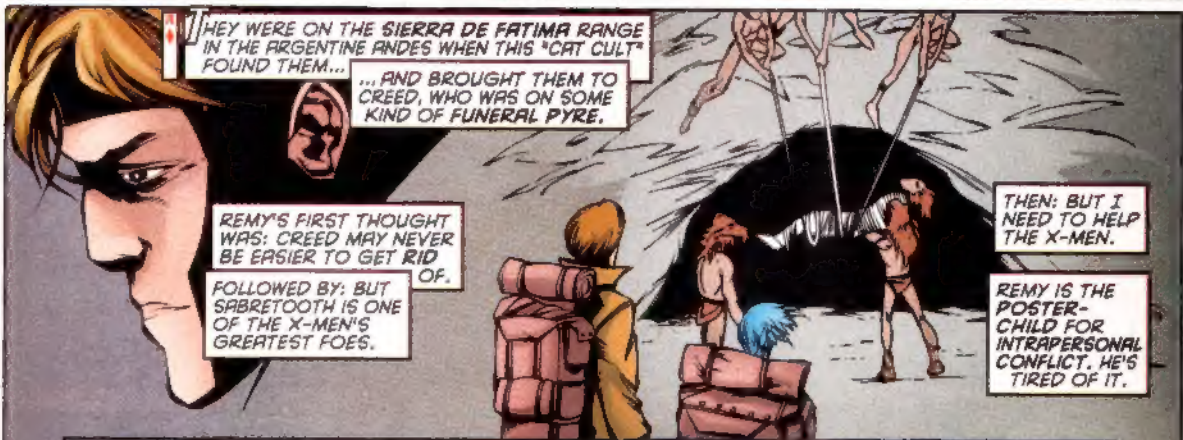
-- BANG... YOU DEAD!





OR  
MAYBE  
NOT.

YOU  
CLAIMED YOU  
WOULD HELP  
THE GOD OF  
THE HUNT.



THEY WERE ON THE SIERRA DE FATIMA RANGE  
IN THE ARGENTINE ANDES WHEN THIS "CAT CULT"  
FOUND THEM...

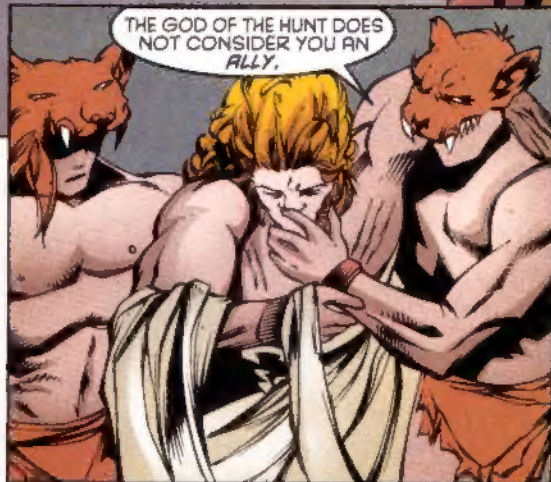
... AND BROUGHT THEM TO  
CREED, WHO WAS ON SOME  
KIND OF FUNERAL PYRE.

REMY'S FIRST THOUGHT  
WAS: CREED MAY NEVER  
BE EASIER TO GET RID  
OF.

FOLLOWED BY: BUT  
SABRETOOTH IS ONE  
OF THE X-MEN'S  
GREATEST FOES.

THEN: BUT I  
NEED TO HELP  
THE X-MEN.

REMY IS THE  
POSTER-  
CHILD FOR  
INTRAPERSONAL  
CONFLICT. HE'S  
TIRED OF IT.



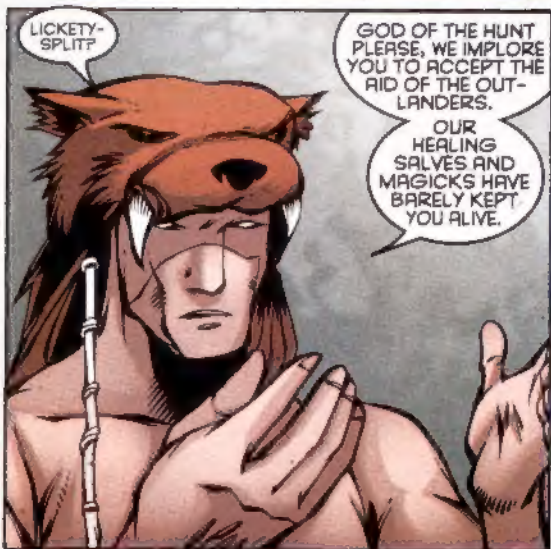
THE GOD OF THE HUNT DOES  
NOT CONSIDER YOU AN  
ALLY.



YOUR "GOD"  
JUMPED ME THE  
SECOND YOU LET  
HIM DOWN...

... HE DIDN'T  
GIVE ME MUCH  
CHOICE BUT T'  
DEFEND MYSELF.

'SIDES, HE'S  
SO BEAT UP, I  
COULD KILL HIM  
LICKETY-SPLIT AN'  
WE ALL KNOW IT.



LICKETY-  
SPLIT?

GOD OF THE HUNT  
PLEASE, WE IMPORE  
YOU TO ACCEPT THE  
AID OF THE OUT-  
LANDERS.

OUR  
HEALING  
SALVES AND  
MAGICKS HAVE  
BARELY KEPT  
YOU ALIVE.



I'D RATHER  
DIE... THAN  
OWE MY LIFE  
TO HIM.



TO WHICH REMY SAID:  
"THEN DIE... BUT Y'LL  
NEVER GET REVENGE  
ON WHOEVER DID  
THIS TO YOU."

TO WHICH CREED  
SAID: "... WAIT ..."

A DONKEY, A BUS  
AND TWO TRAIN  
RIDES LATER...

... THE LEAR JET OF THE GAVIN AND GAVIN INTERNATIONAL  
DELIVERY SERVICE IS FLYING OVER THE ATLANTIC TOWARDS  
TASMANIA.

CREED TOLD THEM WHERE TO  
GO, THEN SLEPT THE ENTIRE  
WAY.

THE TOWN IS SO  
SMALL AND SO  
REMOTE, IT DOESN'T  
EVEN HAVE A NAME.

BUT IT DOES  
HAVE A BAR...

C'MON, VICKY,  
UNBURDEN YOUR  
SOUL...

BAR

... AND FINALLY  
TELL YOUR "OLD  
PAL" REMY WHAT  
HAPPENED.

LOADED  
QUESTION,  
CAJUN.

GOT JUMPED --  
BY SOMEONE...

... BY SOMEONE WHO TOOK ME DOWN AND  
TOOK ME APART... LIKE IT AIN'T NEVER  
HAPPENED BEFORE.

"AN' YOU  
WOKE UP  
LOOKIN'  
LIKE RICE  
PUDDIN'?"

BARELY ALIVE --  
MY MUTANT HEALIN'  
FACTOR ALMOST  
BURNED OUT.  
GOT SAVED  
BY LOS TIGRES  
DE LA SANGRE --  
THE BLOOD  
TIGERS.

ONLY  
COMFORTIN'  
PART...

... IS  
KNOWIN'  
YOU X-FEES  
ARE IN FOR A  
SURPRISE.

AN' WHAT'S  
THAT SUPPOSED  
T' MEAN, VIC?

YOU'LL  
FIND OUT  
SOON  
ENOUGH,  
LeBEAU.

YOU'LL FIND OUT  
SOON ENOUGH.





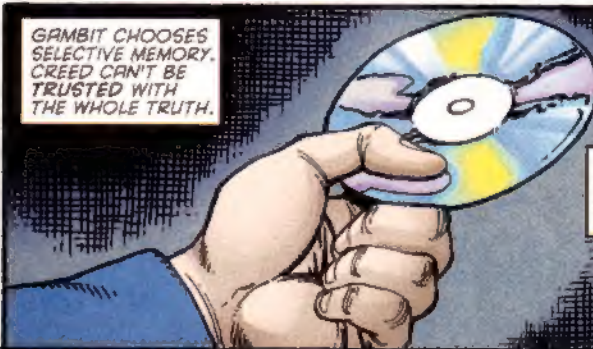
SO WHAT WINDMILL  
YOU TILTIN' AT NOW,  
LEBEAUP?

CUEBALL  
SEND YOU TO  
DO MORE  
GOOD?

ACTUALLY,  
THIS ONE'S  
BEHIND  
XAVIER'S  
BACK.



LIKIN'  
IT BETTER  
ALREADY.  
DETAILS?



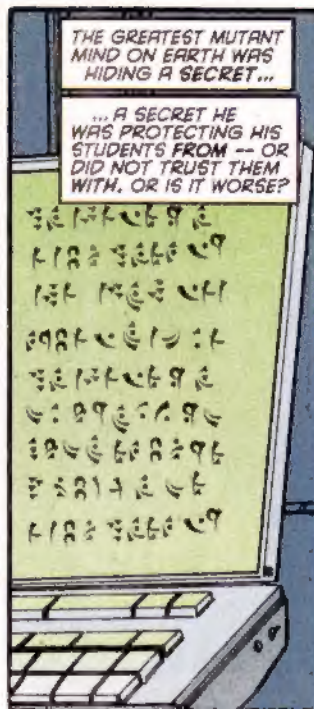
GAMBIT CHOOSES  
SELECTIVE MEMORY.  
CREED CAN'T BE  
TRUSTED WITH  
THE WHOLE TRUTH.

WHICH IS FINE, SINCE  
REMY DOESN'T EVEN  
KNOW THE WHOLE  
TRUTH.

HE STOLE A DISC  
FROM THE X-MEN'S  
MANSION THAT  
HINTED AT XAVIER'S  
SUSPICIONS.



READ IT THROUGH IN  
CHICAGO ON THE WAY  
TO GET HELP FROM ONE  
OF SINISTER'S MARAUDERS,  
AN OLD FRIEND CALLED  
SCALPHUNTER.



THE GREATEST MUTANT  
MIND ON EARTH WAS  
HIDING A SECRET...

... A SECRET HE  
WAS PROTECTING HIS  
STUDENTS FROM -- OR  
DID NOT TRUST THEM  
WITH. OR IS IT WORSE?



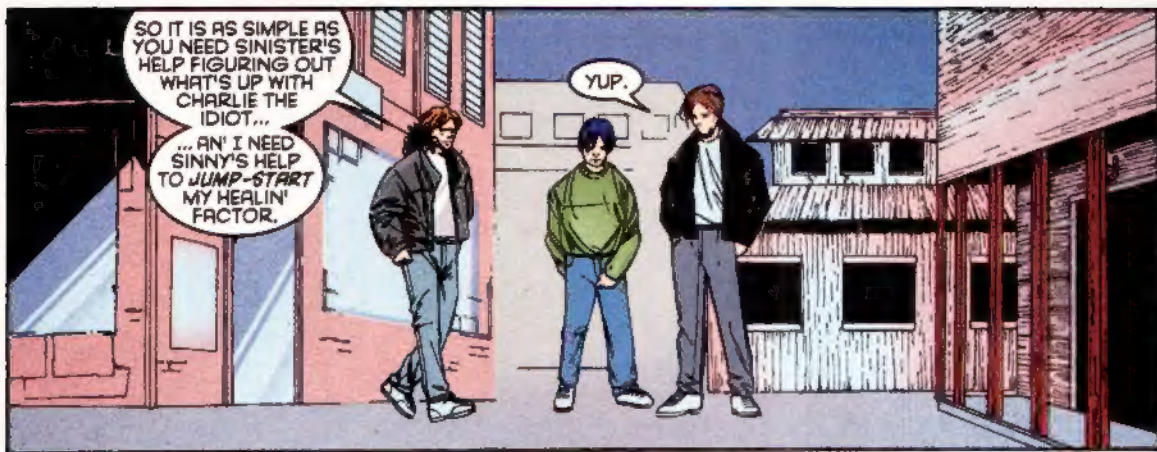
WAS XAVIER'S MIND FRACTURING  
AGAIN? COULD IT MEAN THE RETURN  
OF ONSLAUGHT?

REMY HAS HIS  
SUSPICIONS...

... BUT HE'S  
KEEPING THEM  
TO HIMSELF.

FOR  
NOW.







**M**MORNING...

C'MON,  
JAKE...

AAAAA

... DID YOU  
ACTUALLY EXPECT  
A HOUSE WIT' A  
DRIVEWAY AN' A  
DOORBELL?

I DON'T  
KNOW. YOU'RE  
SAYING "INFILTRATE  
SINISTER'S BASE,"  
AND I'M THINKING,  
OKAY, KINDA COOL,  
LIKE JAMES BOND  
STUFF MAYBE --

-- OR  
EVEN Dr.  
EVIL --





WHY'D YOU DRAG AN AMATEUR ALONG?

COMEDIC RELIEF.  
SPEAKIN' OF... HE HID THE KEY UNDER A ROCK?



YEAH... YOU KNOW SINISTER -- VERY --NNGMM -- "FATHER KNOWS -- MMRR -- BEST."



LET ME HELP, VIC.

I KNOW WHAT A STRAIN LIFTIN' THIS ITSY-BITSY ROCK MUST BE FOR SOMEONE IN YOUR... FRAGILE... CONDITION.



YOU LIKE IT, LeBEAU? KNOWIN' I'M HURTIN'?

ACTUALLY... YAH.



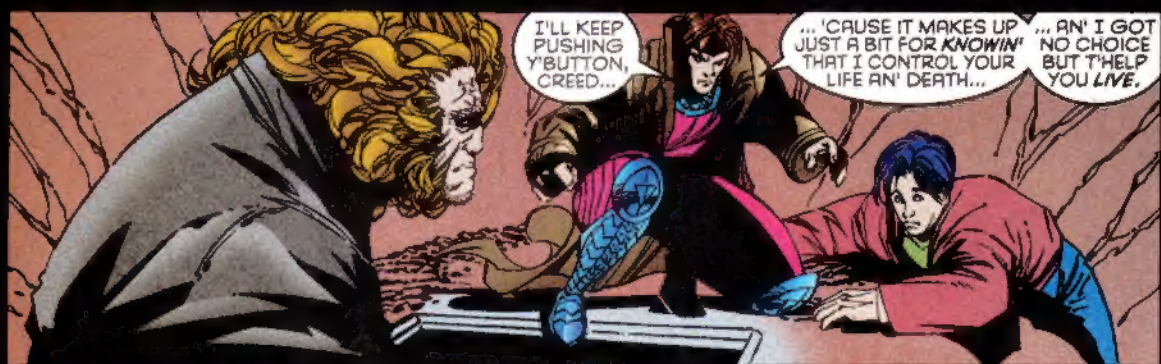
WELL... YOU AIN'T GONNA GET A RISE OUTTA ME NOW, CAJUN.

BUT SOMEDAY SOON I'M GONNA RIP THAT SMIRK OFF YER FACE.

Ooh, NICE TIMIN', VIC.

VRUSHMM





I'LL KEEP  
PUSHING  
Y'BUTTON,  
CREED...

... 'CAUSE IT MAKES UP  
JUST A BIT FOR *KNOWIN'*  
THAT I CONTROL YOUR  
LIFE AN' DEATH...

... AN' I GOT  
NO CHOICE  
BUT T'HELP  
YOU *LIVE*.

OUR ROLES  
WERE REVERSED,  
YOU'D DO THE  
SAME THING...

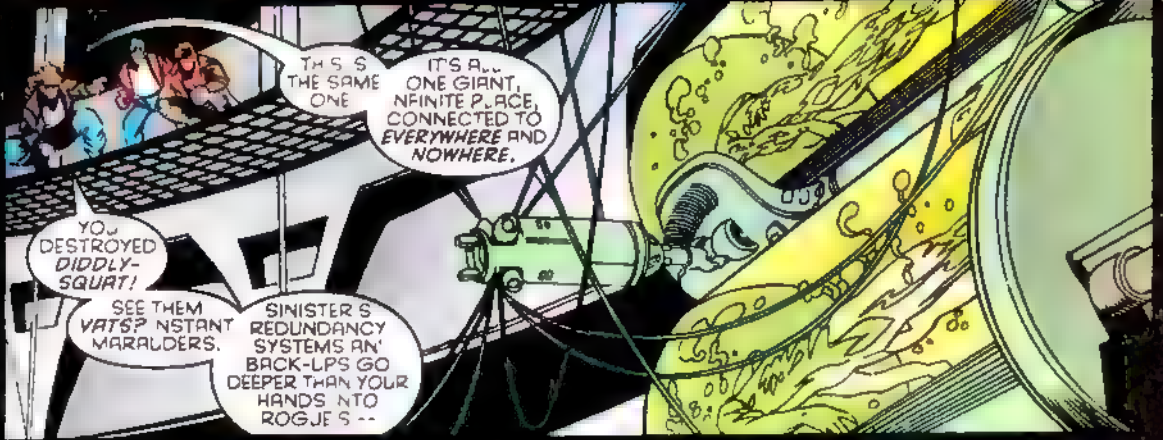
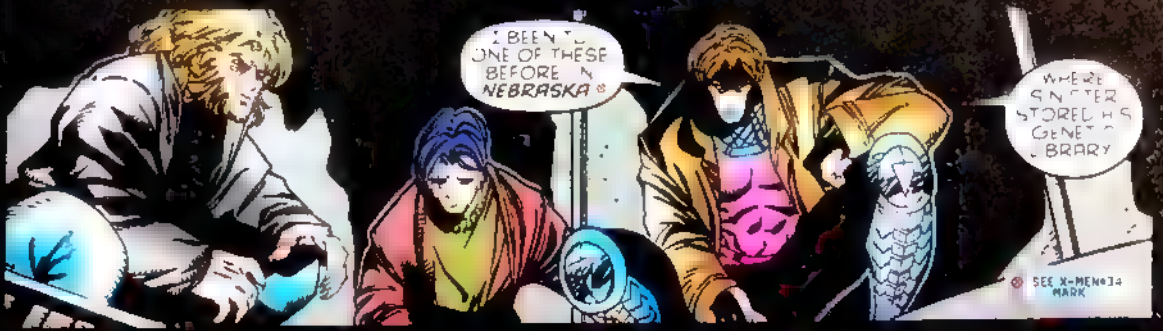
YOU REALLY  
BELIEVE THAT,  
LEBEAU, THEN  
YOU KNOW  
NOTHIN' ABOUT  
ME.

I GOTTA  
TELL YOU,  
FOR A LITTLE  
ROCK...



... I LOVE  
WHAT HE'S  
DONE WITH THE  
*SPACE*.









HEY, JUST TRYING TO PLAY THAT WHOLE "COMEDIC RELIEF" ANGLE

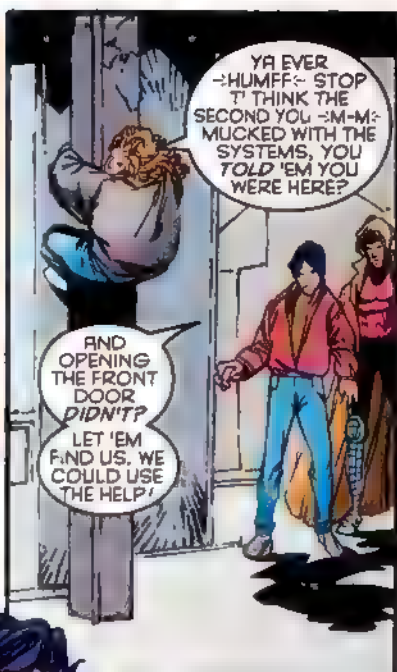
PLUS, I'M A MESSENGER. EVERY FANCY BUILDING HAS A DIRECTORY.

THIS PLATFORM LOOKED ABOUT RIGHT.



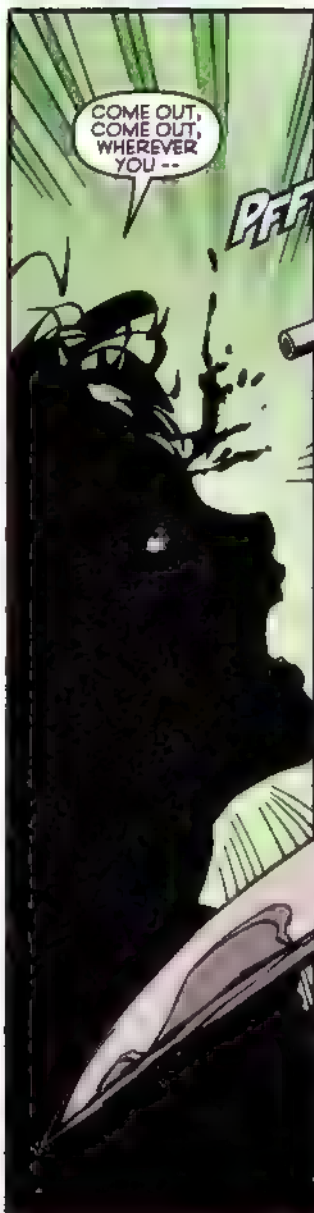
FIND A LISTIN' FOR "ADVANCED MUTAGENIC DETECTION DEVICES"?

NO, BUT THERE'S A VICTORIA'S SECRET ON LEVEL THREE HUNDRED



YA EVER -HUMFF- STOP T' I THINK THE SECOND YOU -M-M- MUCKED WITH THE SYSTEMS, YOU TOLD 'EM YOU WERE HERE?

AND OPENING THE FRONT DOOR DIDN'T? LET 'EM FIND US. WE COULD USE THE HELP!



COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU --



SORRY, REMY... WE GOT NO CHOICE... BUT TO KILL YOU!

PFT



# INTERLUDE

WUGJENOT MOTHERS IN THE SPITALFIELD'S SECTION OF LONDON TELL A STORY OF THE STRANGE, DARK MAN WHO ROLLS IN WITH THE FOG OFF THE THAMES.

THE LEGEND IS USED TO FRIGHTEEN BAD LITTLE CHILDREN

FEW HAVE EVER ACTUALLY LAID EYES ON THE STRANGER...

WHO SUMMONS THE TITHE COLLECTOR TO THIS WORLD OF DREAMS?

OK, PLEASE, ENOUGH WITH THE BARNABAS COLLINS ACT!

AS IF THE HOLLOW VOICE THING WORKS ON ME!

WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT DO YOU WANT?

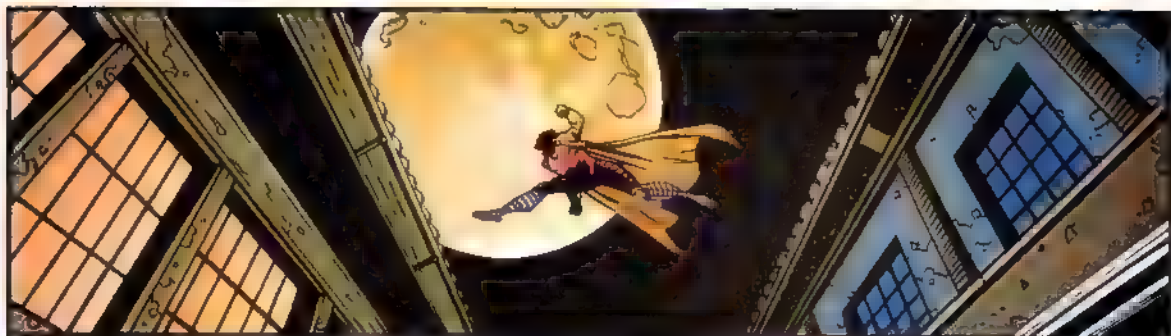
WHY AM I DREAMING ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN THE PAST?

CALL ME FONTANELLE. I AM SOMETHING OF A... DREAM THERAPIST.

AND WE'RE HERE BECAUSE THIS IS WHEN YOUR FORMER BOSS, THE LATE, UNLAMENTED IMMORTAL NAMED CANDRA...

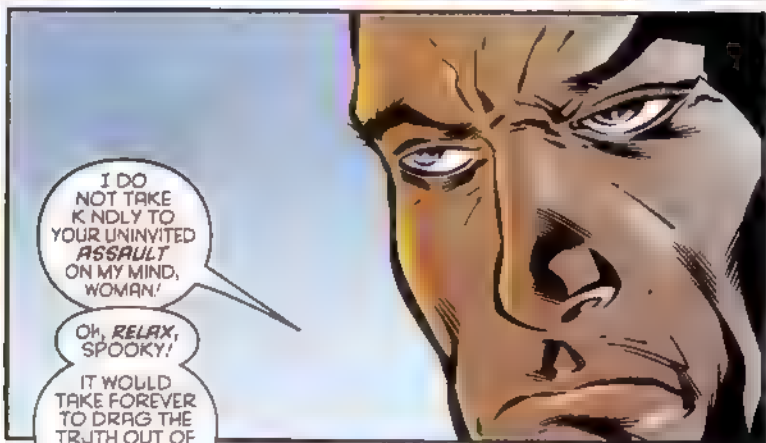
...CONSUMMATED A TREACHEROUS PACT WITH THE GUILDS OF NEW ORLEANS. AND ALSO WHEN YOU FIRST MET...





ADAM,  
SECURE  
TH ROPE!  
JAKE, GET  
DOWN BELOW,  
IMPERSONATE  
A BOBBY AN'  
DRAW ATTENT.ON  
AWAY FROM  
US!

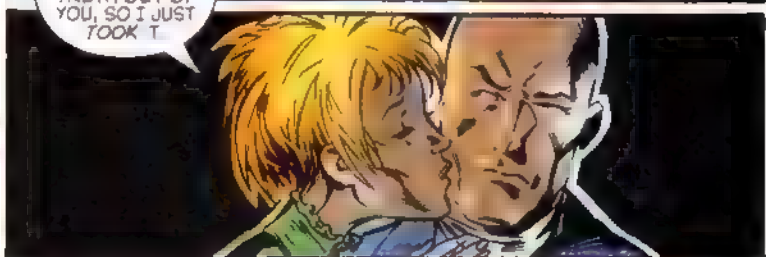
AH, NOT  
ONE OF MY BETTER  
EVEN NGS, IF I  
RECALL



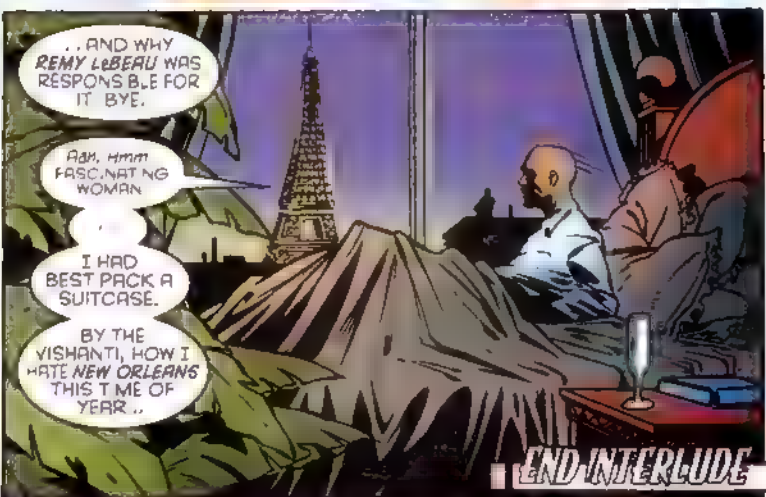
I DO  
NOT TAKE  
K NDLY TO  
YOUR UNINVITED  
ASSAULT  
ON MY MIND,  
WOMAN!

Oh, RELAX,  
SPOOKY!

IT WOULD  
TAKE FOREVER  
TO DRAG THE  
TRUTH OUT OF  
YOU, SO I JUST  
TOOK T



AND NOW I KNOW  
WHY THE GUILDS WERE  
ENSLAVED TO YOUR  
MASTER



...AND WHY  
REMY LEBEAU WAS  
RESPONS BLE FOR  
IT BYE.

AH, HMM  
FASC.NAT NG  
WOMAN

I HAD  
BEST PACK A  
SUITCASE.

BY THE  
VISHANTI, HOW I  
HATE NEW ORLEANS  
THIS T ME OF  
YEAR ..

END INTERLUDE





HOW  
COME YOU AIN'T  
DEAD?!

IT'S ONLY  
A FLESH-  
WOUND.

A DOUBLE-  
TAP THROUGH  
THE HEAD?!

RIPTIDE, A MUTANT  
WHO WHIPS CALCIFIED  
BONE SHURIKEN

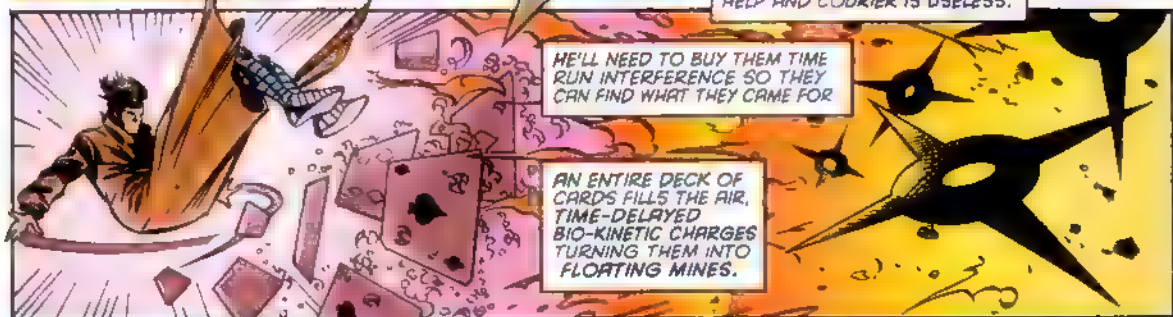
SCALPHUNTER, AN  
ELITE MARKSMAN AND  
BIONIC ASSASSIN.

HARPOON, INUIT  
MUTANT TOSSING  
JAVELINS CHARGED  
WITH BIO-ENERGY

THEY ARE THE  
MARAUDERS,  
OWNED BODY  
AND SOUL BY  
MR. SINISTER.

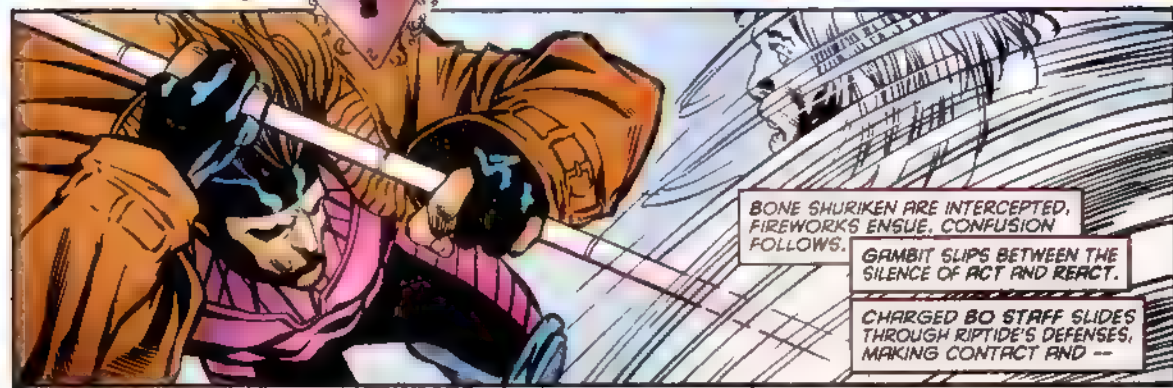
GRAY CROW -- SCALPHUNTER --  
WAS ONCE REMY'S FRIEND.  
BEFORE HE BECAME... THIS.

GAMBIT KNOWS CREED CAN'T  
HELP AND COURIER IS USELESS.



HE'LL NEED TO BUY THEM TIME  
RUN INTERFERENCE SO THEY  
CAN FIND WHAT THEY CAME FOR

AN ENTIRE DECK OF  
CARDS FILLS THE AIR,  
TIME-DELAYED  
BIO-KINETIC CHARGES  
TURNING THEM INTO  
FLOATING MINES.



BONE SHURIKEN ARE INTERCEPTED,  
FIREWORKS ENSUE, CONFUSION  
FOLLOWS.

GAMBIT SLIPS BETWEEN THE  
SILENCE OF ACT AND REACT.

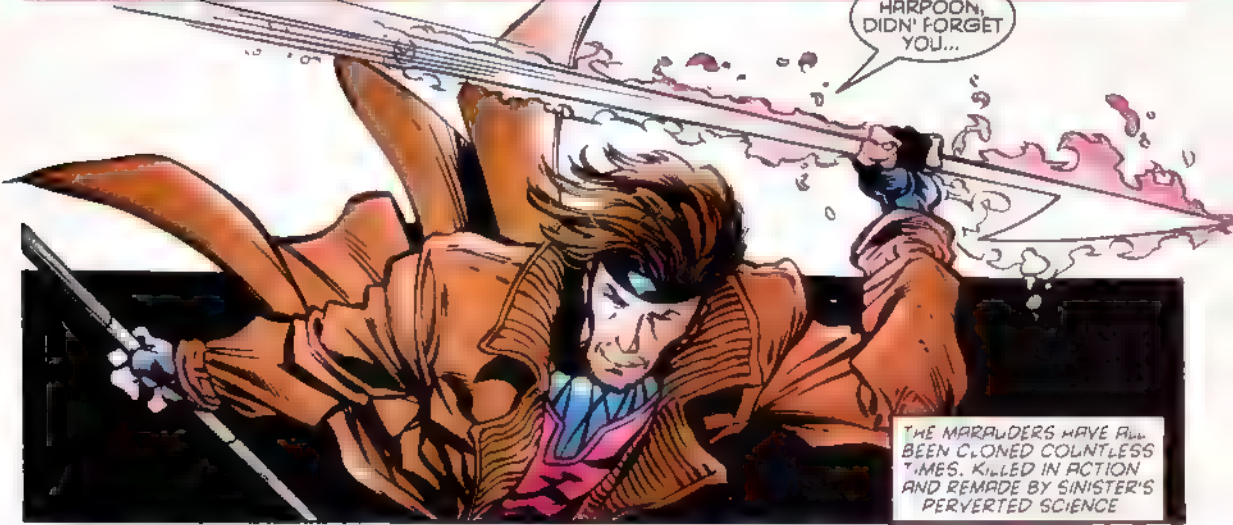
CHARGED BO STAFF SLIDES  
THROUGH RIPTIDE'S DEFENSES,  
MAKING CONTACT AND --





EV'RY  
TIME I TAKE  
THIS GUY DOWN,  
I LEARN  
SOMETHIN'  
NEW ABOUT  
HIM.

AY,  
HARPOON,  
DIDN' FORGET  
YOU...



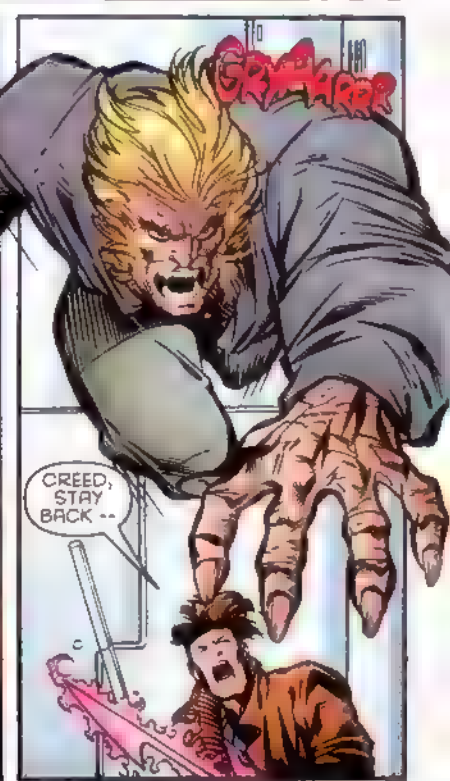
THE MARAUDERS HAVE ALL  
BEEN CLONED COUNTLESS  
TIMES. KILLED IN ACTION  
AND REMADE BY SINISTER'S  
PERVERTED SCIENCE



YOU KNOW WHY I'M  
HERE, GREY CROW --  
AN' I KNOW YOU GOT  
NO CHOICE BUT T' FIGHT.  
YOU BEEN GENETICALLY  
PROGRAMMED TO

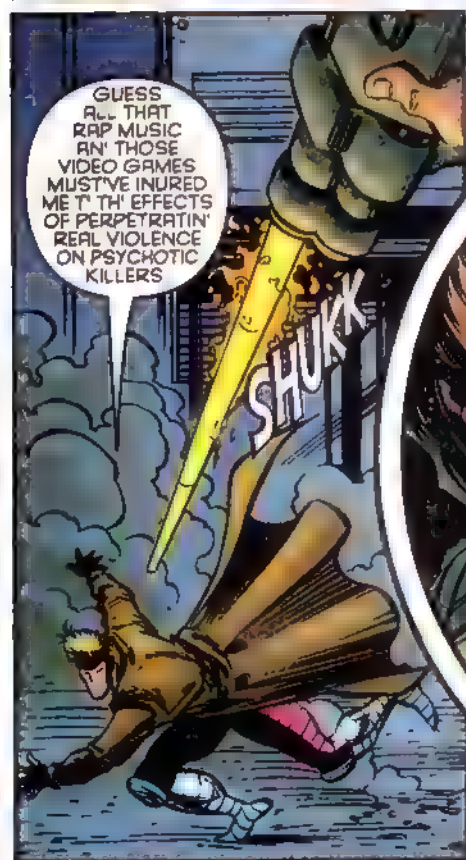
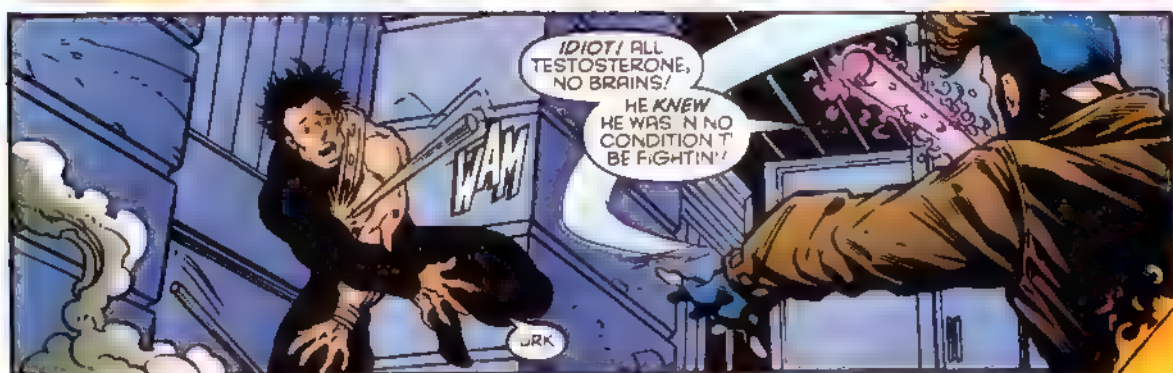
BUT NO  
ONE HAS TO  
GET HURT --  
ALL I WANT IS  
INFORMATION.

THE  
KIND OF  
INFO ONLY  
YOUR BOSS  
HAS.

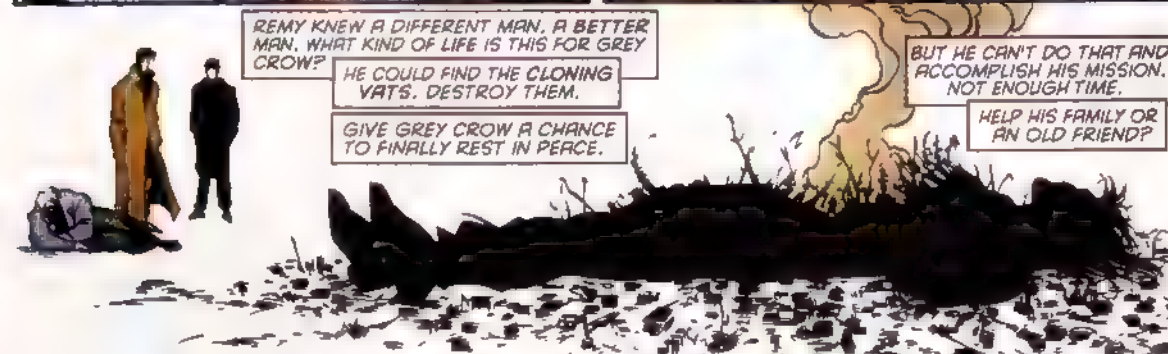
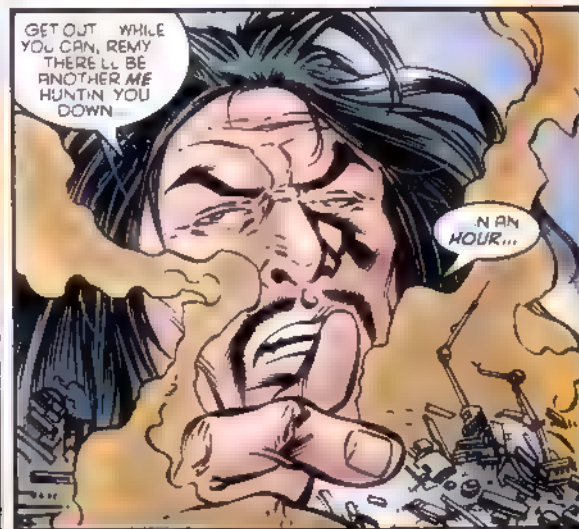


CREED, STAY  
BACK --

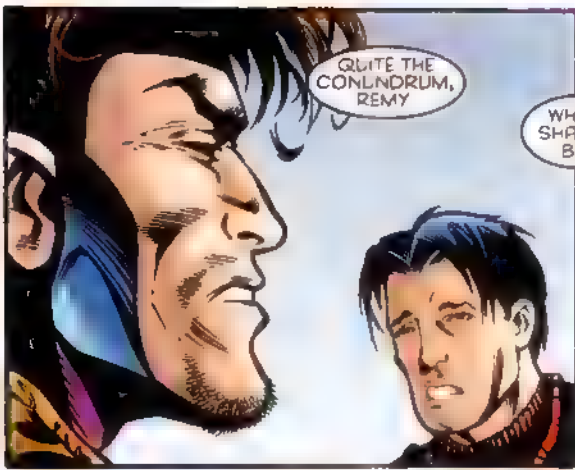












QUITE THE CONLNDRUM, REMY

WHICH SHALL IT BE?



THERE IS A CERTAIN NOBILITY TO GIVING SCALPHUNTER HIS... FREEDOM.



AND OF COURSE, STABBING A KNIFE INTO THE HEART OF MY FACILITIES --

-- WOULD BE... PRODUCTIVE FOR THE LONG-TERM GOALS OF THE X-MEN



ASSUMING OF COURSE, YOU SURVIVE YOUR CURRENT SHORT-TERM DIFFICULTIES AS YOU W... I HAVE SUCH FAITH IN YOU ALL.

YOU'RE A GAMBLER BY NATURE, REMY. FOLD OR PLAY THE HAND?



AH, YOU'D BE WILLING TO WAGER THAT? I ADMIT SURPRISE



DON'T BLUFF AND DON'T CRY WOLF. SUCH A BOLD MANEUVER WON'T BE NECESSARY.

SAVE THE V.A. FOR ANOTHER DAY.

AFTER ALL, YOU RECRUITED THE MARAUDERS FOR ME YEARS AGO IN EXCHANGE FOR THE CONTENTS OF THAT V.A....

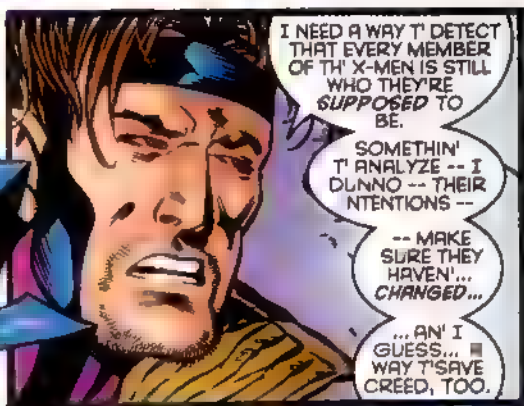
... WHEN YOU REALLY INTEND TO USE IT, PLEASE BE CERTAIN YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.





NEVER FORGET, REMY, THE VIAL WAS AS MUCH FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMANITY... AS IT WAS FOR YOURS.

BACK IN YOUR POCKET. THAT'S BETTER. NOW TO WHAT EXACTLY DO I OWE THIS VISIT?

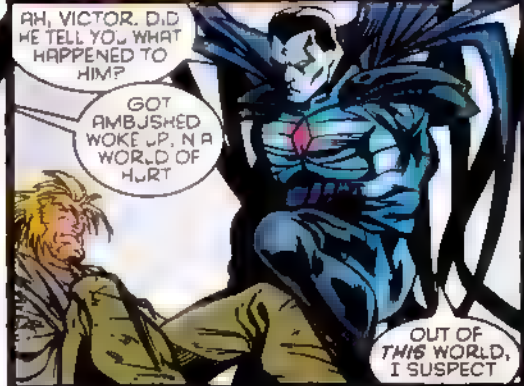


I NEED A WAY T' DETECT THAT EVERY MEMBER OF TH' X-MEN IS STILL WHO THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.

SOMETHIN' T' ANALYZE -- I DUNNO -- THEIR INTENTIONS --

-- MAKE SURE THEY HAVEN'... CHANGED...

... AN' I GUESS... ■ WAY T'SAVE CREED, TOO.



AH, VICTOR. D.D. HE TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

GOT AMBUSHED WOKE UP, IN A WORLD OF HURT

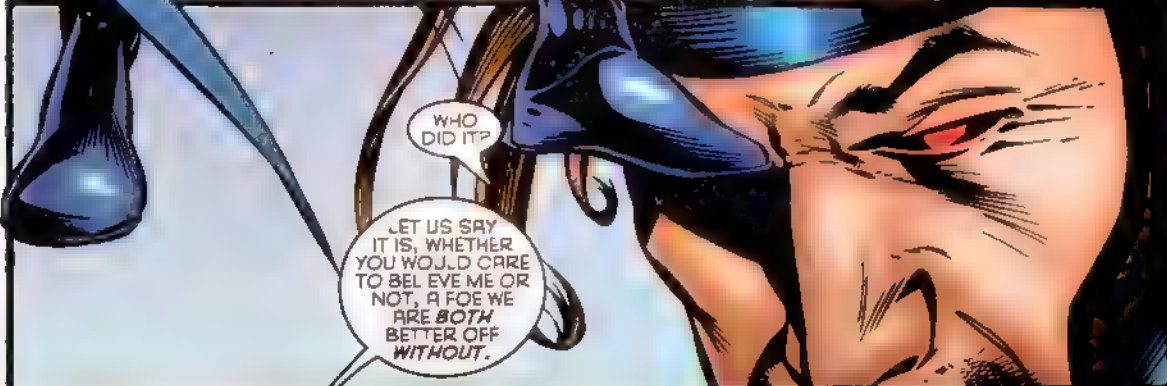
OUT OF THIS WORLD, I SUSPECT



HIS NEWFOUND ADAMANTIUM LACING WAS... FORCIBLY... REMOVED.

I AM RATHER... FAMILIAR... WITH BOTH THE SURGICAL PROCEDURES INVOLVED... AND THE SURGEON HIMSELF

I BELIEVE THE X-MEN ARE IN FOR SOME QUITE TRYING TIMES.



WHO DID IT?

LET US SAY IT IS, WHETHER YOU WOULD CARE TO BELIEVE ME OR NOT, A FOE WE ARE BOTH BETTER OFF WITHOUT.





FOR THAT REASON, I AGREE TO ASSIST YOU.

A **CONCENTRATED DOSAGE** OF THE HEALING FACTOR THAT COURSES THROUGH LOGAN AND CREED'S BODY.

THE GLAND IN VICTOR'S BODY THAT **SECRETES** THE ENZYME HAS BEEN SEVERELY DEPLETED DUE TO THE DAMAGE DONE HIM.



THIS SHOULD SUFFICE IN ALLOWING HIS BODY THE CHANCE TO HEAL ITSELF.

AS FOR THE VERY TALL ORDER OF A **PSI-SCANNER** CAPABLE OF DETECTING CHANGES IN A SUBJECT'S UNIQUE MENTAL IMPRINT...



... Oh, LOOK, WHAT I FOUND. YES... **THIS** SHOULD DO THE TRICK.

WHAT IS IT?



BELIEVE ME, YOU'LL KNOW WHAT IT DOES AS SOON AS YOU INJECT YOUR TARGET WITH IT.

AN' I SHOULD TRUST YOU?

BECAUSE YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.

AND BECAUSE I'M **DEVIOUS**, NOT **DUPlicitous**.


AH-AH, AND IN RETURN FOR MY **MAGNANIMOUS** GESTURE?

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

VICTOR. I MISS HIM SO.








NOW, WE MUST'VE  
DONE SOME REAL  
DAMAGE TO YOUR  
GENETIC STORAGE  
TANKS AWHILE  
BACK --


-- OR ELSE  
YOU'D HAVE  
SABRETOOTH  
CLONE'S  
SCRATCHIN'  
FOR CAT  
NIP.

THAT MEANS  
YOU DON'T HAVE  
HIS GENETIC  
MATERIAL -- AN' I  
AIN' LETTIN' YOU  
GET IT BACK.



Hmm, YES... BUT A  
STALEMATE AFFECTS  
ME NOT IN THE  
LEAST...

... WHILE  
MAKING  
YOUR MISSION  
A FAILURE.



A COMPROMISE OFFER.  
SOMETHIN' YOU DON'  
HAVE... SOMETHIN'  
VERY... UNIQUE.

YOU INTRIGUE  
ME, REMY... AS  
ALWAYS.  
CONTINUE.

HIM.

ME?

MR. GAVIN  
DOES NOT  
REGISTER AS A  
MUTANT ON MY  
SCANNERS.

BUT HE IS.  
SHOWS THE  
KINDA CONTROL  
HE HAS OVER  
HIS BODY.

THINK WHAT  
YOU COULD LEARN  
FROM JUS' A LI'L PIECE  
OF SOMEONE WHO  
TALKS TO EVERY CELL  
IN HIS BODY!



HEY!  
WAIT A  
SEC --







"TIME DELAY  
CHARGED  
CARDS IN THE  
Tesseract  
DOORWAY."

NOW HE CAN'T  
FOLLOW US.

YEAH, SO? HE MADE OUT  
BETTER THAN WE DID!  
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW  
IF THAT DOO-HICKEY  
WILL HELP THE  
X-MEN!

WACHOOOM

"ANOTHER OF  
SINISTER'S  
DIMENSIONAL  
ACCESS POINTS  
CLOSED OFF --  
BOTH WAYS."

FIND OUT  
SOON ENOUGH.  
NEW FINGER  
GROWN IN  
YET?

I CAN PICK  
MY NOSE  
AGAIN.

I'M GLAD.  
KILL THE CELLS  
IN THE FINGER  
WE LEFT BEHIND,  
JAKE.

ALL TRACE  
OF IT -- SINISTER  
DOESN'T GET SO  
MUCH AS A NAIL  
CLIPPIN' LEFT  
BEHIND.

Ooh,  
DOUBLE-  
CROSSING  
SINISTER?  
COOL!

WHEN HE  
COMES LOOKING  
FOR REVENGE, I  
HAD NOTHING  
TO DO WITH  
THIS.

AN'  
THAT'S  
HOW YOU  
PLAY A GAME  
OF POKER!

Nnggmm.  
DONE.

**NEXT  
MONTH:**

A TIME-HOPPING JEWEL GAMBIT IN A TUX!  
FEATRS: CANDOR! BARON STROCKER!  
367. FURY & THE HOWLING COMMANDOS!  
THE RETURN OF THE WITNESS & A SURPRISE MARRIAGE!  
**ALL IN ONE STORY! DON'T MISS IT!**  
(FOR MORE ON THE SHATTERING, CHECK OUT  
UNCANNY X-MEN #374 & X-MEN #94!)